

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 26 are pending, with claims 3, 4, 7 - 11 and 20 having been objected to, claims 1 - 6 and 12 - 19 having been rejected, and claims 21 - 26 having been added, as will be discussed in detail below.

Claims 3 and 4 stand objected to because of informalities. Reconsideration of this objection is respectfully requested on the basis that "said converging optical system" at line 5 of claims 3 and 4 has been changed by having been amended above to - - said third optical system - - as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 1 - 6 and 12 - 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohno et al. (published application no. US 2001/0002152 A1). Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of claim 1 having been amended above. As amended, claims 1 - 6 and 12 - 19 no longer are anticipated by Ohno et al. In Ohno et al., the other light beams progressively separate in the sub-scanning direction after being incident on the multi-sided splitter mirror 28, but this is not "before entering the rear optical system" which would necessarily include the f- θ lenses 27a and 28b of Ohno et al.

The Examiner is thanked for indicating allowable subject matter in the first Office Action (namely, the subject matter of objected to claims 7 - 11 and 20, which claims were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim). Claims 21 - 26 have been added and are directed to such allowable subject matter. Claim 21 corresponds in scope to claim 7 as originally filed, but has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 22 - 26 correspond in scope to claims 8 - 11 and 20 as originally filed, but these claims no longer depend from a rejected base claim and instead depend (directly or indirectly) from claim 21. Therefore, claims 21 - 26 should be allowable.

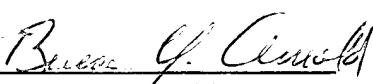
Having amended claim 1 so as to patentably distinguish claims 1 - 6 and 12 - 19 from Ohno et al., having corrected the informalities in claims 3 and 4, and having added new claims 21 - 26 that correspond in scope to the objected-to subject matter contained in claims 7 - 11 and 20 as originally

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filed, it is respectfully requested that, unless more pertinent prior art is found by the Examiner, an early Notice of Allowability be provided. A check in the amount of \$300.00 is enclosed to cover the fee for 6 additional claims in excess of 20 claims.

Respectfully submitted,

ARNOLD INTERNATIONAL

By 
Bruce Y. Arnold
Reg. No. 28,493

(703) 759-2991

P.O. Box 129
Great Falls, VA 22066-0129